

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are pending. Claims 1 and 5 have been amended.

In the Office Action, Claims 5-7 were indicated to be allowable, although objected to because of their dependence on a rejected base claim. Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,107,964 to Smith. Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,306,442 to Shröck.

Response to Rejections

Applicant has amended Claim 5 to be in independent form, including all of the limitations of Claim 2. Accordingly, Claims 5-7 are in condition for allowance.

Applicant has amended Claim 1 to further distinguish over the cited prior art. Claim 1 now recites “said press mechanism including a plurality of shoe elements configured to surround said press zone and an annular piston member moved axially by pressurized hydraulic fluid entering a hydraulic chamber defined by said piston member, said rear wall and said peripheral side wall, said annular piston member moving said shoe elements radially into said press zone when said annular piston member moves axially towards said front wall of the housing.” Thus, the “front wall” of the housing is defined as the wall towards which the piston member moves for urging the shoe elements radially inwardly to perform the swaging operation.

With respect to Smith, it discloses a swaging or crimping press wherein the outer housing 1 is partially closed by a wall 2 secured to the peripheral side wall by fasteners 3. An annular piston member 4 is mounted in the housing 1 such that hydraulic fluid enters a chamber 7 via a port 30 and, during a crimping operation, urges the piston 4 toward the wall 2, thereby moving die holders 8 (shoe elements) radially inwardly. Thus, according to the definition of “front wall” in Claim 1 as noted above, Smith’s front wall is the wall 2, as illustrated below:

Fig. 2

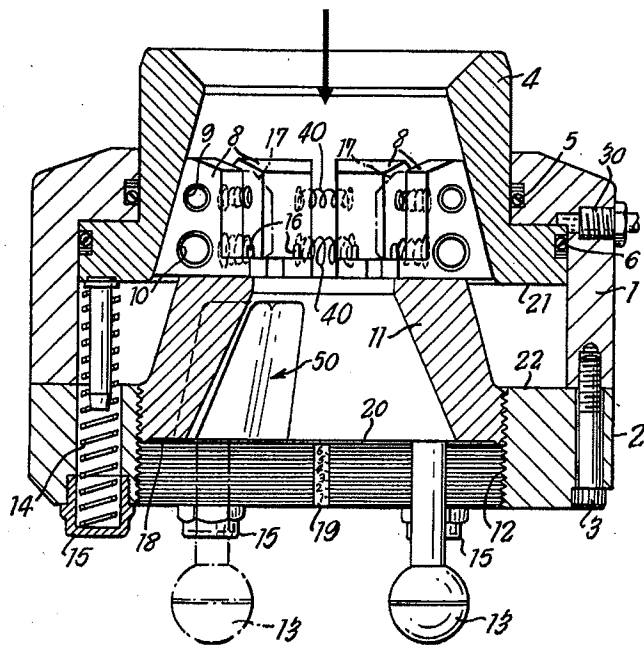
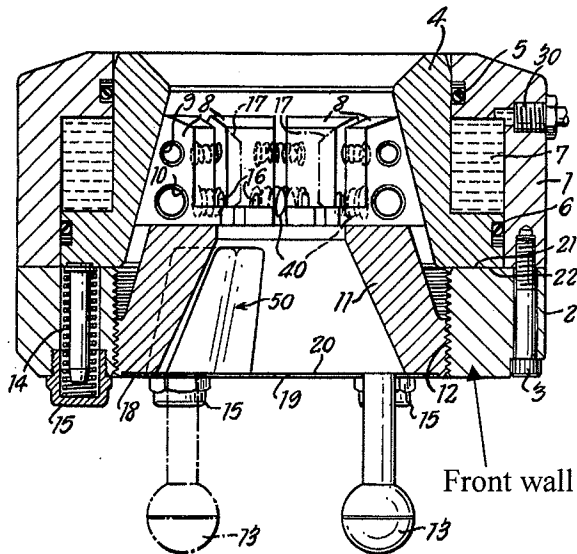


Fig. 3



The die holders 8 are supported on and slide radially inwardly and outwardly on the upper surface of the die base 11 that is screw-threaded into the central opening in the front wall 2 so that its axial position can be adjusted to effectively adjust the crimping effect provided by the die holders 8. As can be seen in Figures 3 and 4 above, the piston member 4 has a stop or end position when it engages the inner surface of the front wall 2. As noted, the front wall 2 is connected by fasteners 3 to the peripheral side wall of the housing 1. Consequently, full high-pressure loading is applied to the front wall 2, which risks failure of the fasteners 3. Moreover, this high-pressure loading on the front wall 2 also places significant bending loads on the side wall of the housing 1, which has adverse effects on the accuracy of a crimping operation carried out by the press.

Smith does not teach or suggest a “front wall integrally formed with said peripheral side wall” as required by Claim 1. Rather, Smith’s front wall 2 is formed separately from the peripheral side wall and is connected to the side wall by fasteners 3. The advantage of the press as claimed in Claim 1 is avoidance or mitigation of the risk of fastener failure and side wall

bending as described above for Smith's press. Smith neither recognizes such problems nor provides any hint as to their solution as reflected in Claim 1.

Shröck's press has essentially the same type of construction as Smith's press in material respects, since Shröck's piston member 6 is moved axially toward the wall 5 in order to urge the shoe elements 26 radially inwardly. The front wall 5 is not formed integrally with the peripheral side wall 2, but rather is a separate member secured to the side wall 2. Thus, even if Smith and Shröck were combined in some manner, they would not have suggested the claimed invention.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 1 is patentable over the cited prior art.

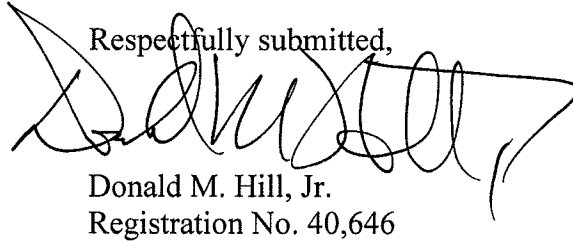
Claim 2 is patentable for similar reasons, since it includes limitations substantially the same as those noted above for Claim 1.

Therefore, Claims 1-4 are submitted to be in condition for allowance, along with Claims 5-7 as previously noted.

* * *

Conclusion

Based on the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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ELECTRONICALLY FILED USING THE EFS-WEB ELECTRONIC FILING SYSTEM OF THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE ON AUGUST 12, 2010.